

**MINUTES OF THE 2008 ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE
SCHENECTADY CITY COUNCIL – JANUARY 1, 2008**

City Clerk Carolyn Friello called the Organizational Meeting to order at 1:00 P.M. in Room 209, City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Ms. Friello called upon Rev. Dominick Isopo, St. Luke's Catholic Church, to deliver the Invocation.

Ms. Friello then called upon the Electric City Detachment Marine Corp League for the Presentation of Colors. Councilmember Barbara Blanchard then led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**INTRODUCTION AND ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE TO THE
HON. MAYOR BRIAN U. STRATTON FOLLOWED BY HIS
2008 INAUGURAL REMARKS:**

1. The Oath of Office was administered to the Hon. Mayor Brian U. Stratton by the Hon. Christine Clark. Holding the Bible for Mr. Stratton was his wife, Lisa and his son, Alexander.

The following is the Mayor's 2008 Inaugural Remarks:

Thank you, Judge Christine Clark. It is an honor to receive the Oath of Office from you as I begin a new term as Mayor. Thank you for being with my family and me today, Your Honor, and thank you for your dedicated service to our community. I also wish to thank my family for standing with me. Lisa and Alex, thank you for the love and immeasurable support you have given me each and every moment of these last 4 years – and for all that you have given up to make it possible for me to serve. And a special thank you to Lisa's parents – Alex's grandparents – Alice and Donald Brown for their love and encouragement always. And to Lisa's sister, Debbie, for all that she does to keep our family strong. While my own brother, my sisters and my mother make their homes in other parts of the country – it has always been Lisa's family who is my family... here. It is they who have been with us ... day in and day out ... providing the kind of love and support that only a family can. Mr. President, City Council members, ladies and gentlemen, friends ... **"Happy New Year"**! I am grateful for the honor and opportunity to stand before you this first day of 2008 to begin a new term as Mayor of Schenectady – the city of my birth. Let me also express my thanks to the voters for their overwhelming support on Election Day. Those to follow the statistics more closely than I ... tell me that our margin of victory on November 6th – at 71% of the vote was the largest margin for either an election or re-election of a Schenectady strong Mayor – since the city returned to that form of government in the 1970's. Four years ago, we began a new era in Schenectady. With the highest of hopes and the strength of conviction, we faced

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unprecedented challenges and uncertainty; challenges that some said were destined to doom our great city. More than \$10,000,000.00 in debt, the absolute lowest credit rating by Moody's of any municipality in New York State, back-to-back, double-digit tax hikes in 2003 and 2004 brought on by years of poor financial management before us left the city in tatters and near ruin ... discouraged private investment, and all but took away any sense of hope our citizens may have had for a better future. But through hard work, difficult choices, and the undeniable resolve of each and every citizen of this city who joined with us to recover, we changed all of that. Taking the tough medicine was not easy, but, it proved essential to eliminating the debt, restoring our junk credit rating to Investment Grade, turning deficit-ridden budgets into record surpluses, attracting new businesses and new jobs, and transforming staggering tax hikes into tax cuts ... all while bringing a new sense of genuine hope for our future. And with a strong partnership with the Schenectady County Legislature, Metroplex, the State Legislature and Washington, we worked with private industry to bring more than \$250,000,000.00 in new investment into our downtown. The recovery began at the very heart of Schenectady – our downtown economic core. And the dividends of new investment and an expanded tax base that continues to take shape along and around State Street, will enable us to bring the needed dollars and energy to the next frontier – our neighborhoods. In many ways, the challenges facing us in 2008 may prove as daunting as those we took on 4 years ago. Our neighborhood streets, sidewalks and local business corridors have long been in need of the kind of new investment and new infrastructure we are only now able to consider. Once proud neighborhoods, where our families grew up, today are too often where absentee landlords and negligent investors have shirked their social and financial responsibilities, and forced us to spend thousands of dollars each year for code enforcement, demolition and blight removal. With the same energy and resolve, and our first Comprehensive Plan in 37 years, we must focus on our neighborhoods. From Washington, we will seek to complete for our share of \$100,000,000.00 in proposed federal funding for demolition and blight remediation. From Metroplex, we will seek at least \$5,000,000.00 to restore our neighborhood commercial corridors to rebuild streets and sidewalks and fund façade restoration projects that can attract new businesses and new families. From the State of New York, we will continue to lobby to increase our share of State Aid so that we can bring home the dollars that Schenectady needs and deserves. We will continue to fine-tune our code enforcement efforts in order that we can hold property owners accountable and to prosecute those who refuse to abide by the law or ignore their obligations. We will target the most severe code violations, blight and neglect for demolition or remediation – opening up new space and new opportunity for owner-occupied, responsible and committed homeowners and new businesses.

And – as we have so sadly seen yet again during this past Christmas week – the need continues to bring real reform to our troubled and tarnished Police Department ... and that we demand nothing less than excellence from those who are sworn to serve and to protect. Under the leadership of Public Safety Commissioner Wayne Bennett, and only with the support echoed by every citizen of this city, the word must go forth and be crystal clear: That there will be absolutely no tolerance of police performance that falls short of professionalism, civil respect and excellence. There can be no room for rogues, cowboys or thugs ... And there will no longer be jobs for those who may chose to believe or act otherwise. They will be fired; they will be replaced; and we will rebuild – we will move on. One-by-one, day-by-day, officer-by-officer, and with a firm resolve to secure a fair contract that will bring the control and reform we have needed for too long, we will rebuild this Department and regain the public’s confidence. That is our responsibility; that is our commitment; that is my pledge to you. Four years ago, I spoke of the State of Schenectady as a tale of two cities. One with a magnificent past, the other with severe financial problems and an uncertain future. Through perseverance and hard work, we have shown that Schenectady remains that shining city on a hill. A city that cannot be hid ... a city with a bright and promising future. It is because of our shared vision, because of the hard work and sacrifice of the citizens of this city, that our future is brighter than it has been in decades. And because of the great people of this city that Schenectady will continue its magnificent heritage. Thank you, God bless you, and God bless the City of Schenectady.

INTRODUCTION AND ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE TO COUNCILMEMBERS:

1. The Oath of Office was administered to the Hon. Joseph L. Allen by the Hon. Vincent Versaci. Holding the Bible for Mr. Allen was Susan Haley, his daughter, Lakeia and his Son-in-Law, Raymond Bowman.
2. The Oath of Office was administered to the Hon. Denise K. Brucker by the former Councilmember Frank J. Maurizio. Holding the Bible for Ms. Brucker was her husband Cliff and her Sister, Eileen.
3. The Oath of Office was administered to the Hon. Thomas Della Sala by the former Councilmember Frank J. Maurizio. Holding the Bible for Mr. Della Sala was his wife, Chery and his son, Adam.

4. The Oath of Office was administered to the Hon. Margaret C. King by the Hon. Paul Tonko. Holding the Bible for Ms. King was Katherine and Donald Ackerman.

The City Clerk called the roll and the following members of the City Council answered to being present:

Present - Councilmembers Joseph L. Allen, Denise K. Brucker, Mark W. Blanchfield, Gary R. McCarthy, Thomas Della Sala, Barbara Blanchard and Margaret C. King

Absent - None.

Also Present – Mayor Brian U. Stratton, City Clerk Carolyn Friello and Corporation Counsel L. John Van Norden, Esq.

INTRODUCTION AND ACTION UPON RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution No. 2008-01

Adopted Unanimously

Ms. Brucker offered the name of Margaret C. King for Council President. The Clerk called the roll for the election of Margaret C. King for Council President: Mr. Allen voted in the Affirmative; Ms. Brucker voted in the Affirmative; Mr. Blanchfield voted in the Affirmative; Mr. McCarthy voted in the Affirmative; Mr. Della Sala voted in the Affirmative and Ms. Blanchard voted in the Affirmative.

The City Clerk declared Ms. King as Council President and turned the meeting over to her.

Resolution No. 2008-02

Adopted Unanimously

Mr. Blanchfield offered a resolution calling for the designation of a City Clerk and offered the name of Carolyn Friello.

Ms. King called the roll for the designation of Carolyn Friello for City Clerk. Mr. Allen voted in the Affirmative; Ms. Brucker voted in the Affirmative; Mr. Blanchfield voted in the Affirmative; Mr. McCarthy voted in the Affirmative; Mr. Della Sala voted in the Affirmative; Ms. Blanchard voted in the Affirmative and Ms. King voted in the Affirmative.

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Ms. King declared Ms. Friello as City Clerk and the Hon. Judge Guido Loyola administered the Oath of Office to Ms. Friello.

Resolution No. 2008-03

Adopted Unanimously

Ms. Blanchard offered a resolution designating the "Daily Gazette" as the City's official newspaper.

BENEDICTION:

Ms. King then called upon Rev. Dominic Isopo, St. Luke's Catholic Church, to deliver the Benediction.

ADJOURNMENT:

Seeing no further business to come before the City Council, Ms. King declared the Organizational Meeting adjourned at 2:00 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

**BY CAROLYN FRIELLO
CITY CLERK**